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AUTHOR Cunningham, James J.; Emukah, Reginald
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ABSTRACT

A study was done of individual job involvement as it affects support services in some areas of higher education. The basic research question was: Given selected personal characteristics of support services staff members and certain situational characteristics, which set of variables would most effectively account for the variations in the degree to which staff members are involved in their respective jobs? The study involved a survey distributed to staff members at the Business Office, Library, Financial Aid Office, and Student Services Department on four campuses of two Texas state universities. Of the original sample, 49 percent or 99 individuals returned the survey. The study determined the extent to which sex, age, level of education, length of time in current job and nine staff-management activities influence the degree of job involvement. The results indicated that sex, age, level of education, length of time in the current job, and employee-management interaction were differentially associated with job involvement. In particular, age and sex were associated with job involvement while level of education suppressed the effect of age and sex factors for job involvement. For management, recognition was the key and principal source of variation in job involvement. (15 references) (JB)

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James J. Cunningham School of Education, Texas Southern University

Reginald Emukah School of Education, Texas Southern University

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Job Involvement As It Relates To Staff-Management Relations In University Administration

James J. Cunningham School of Education, Texas Southern University

Reginald Emukah School of Education, Texas Southern University

This was a study of Job Involvement in support services areas of higher education. The population (N=191) consisted of staff members in the Business Office, the Library, the Financial Aid Office, and the Student Services Department on four campuses of two state supported universities on the Gulf-Coast of Texas. Questionnaires were distributed to 66.5% of the population. Ninety-five returned anonymous questionnaires provided the 49.7% operating sample.

The basic research problem or question was: Given selected personal characteristics to support service staff members and selected situational characteristics as perceived by staff members, what set of variables most effectively will account for the variations in the degree to which staff members are involved in their respective jobs? After a review of the Literature, fourteen variables which had been used largely in sudies outside of higher education were identified as central tothe understanding of the operating dynamics of productive systems in general. These included two groups of variables. The first group related to certain characteristics of the units work force: sex, age, level of education, and length of time on the job. The second group consisted of variables which reflected the environment in which production took place in this case, the production of support services.

Management functions must deal with the organizational structure and its maintenance in order to meet production goals and to meet personal employees objectives of rewards in their several forms. The variables which reflected these key management functions were: organization, domination, communication, membership, integration, recognition, representation, production, and initiation. These functions or activities of management were defined by the subscales of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaires. The perceptions of staff members with certain identifiable characteristics of the ways in which management executed relevant functions were posited to contain the answers to five subquestions implied in the basic research problem. Variance in job involvement defined by six-item form of the Lodahl and Kejner scale was to be accounted for theoretically by the following general hypothesis: Sex, age, level of education, length of time in

current job and the employee-management interaction environment via its several dimensions are differentially associated with job involvement among members in higher education support services departments.

METHOD

Sample

The sample size was determined by the size of the population, the type of data analysis using 14 major varibles, and the expected differences between the number of persons invited to participate and the number of persons returning completed instruments. If only simple random procedures were to be employed in order to be accurate within plus or minus four percent, a sample of 73 persons would have been required. The number of major variables utilized in the data analysis was fourteen. Therefore, if one sets a standard of five cases four each variable, then 70 cases would be required.

One hundred twenty-seven instruments were distributed among a random sample of employees in the four areas on the four campuses. The distribution represented a 66.5 percent sample. The instruction was given to return the unsigned instrument in ballot-box style to a container conveniently and securely located within the support service facility. The procedure was designed to obtain utmost candidness in the responses. Seventy-nine instruments were returned via the boxes and sixteen were mailed directly to the researcher. The total number of the returns was 95, representing 74.8 percent of the original sample. The number of instruments returned resulted in a 49.7 percent operating sample.

Instumentation

The data collection instrument was divided into three parts: (a) Personal characteristics of respondents which were used defined to operationally selected independent variable of factors (b) The Job-Involvement Scale, and (c) The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), which was used to define operationally nine dimensions of the staff-management environment. Permission to use the six-item form of the Job-Involvement Scale and the LBDQ was granted by their respective authors.

Analysis of Data

This study was designed to determine the extent to which sex, age, level of education, length of time in current job and nine staff-management activity variables influenced the degree of job involvement among a sample of staff members in 16 service departments on four campuses representing two state universities in the Gulf Coast region of Texas. Also, the population of this study consisted of staff memebers in libraries, student services

departments, financial aid offices and business offices on four campuses of two state universities. From the population, 95 staff members were randomly selected by campus.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part was developed by the researcher and contained questions about sex, age, level of education completed, and legth of time in current job. Answers to these four questions constituted four of the independent variables. Part two contained the six items of the short form of the Job Involvement Scale. The total score on this scale formed the dependent variable. Part three contained the 150 questions constituting the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). From the latter, nine subscales were referred to in this study as the nine staff-management environment dimensions. Scores on these respective activity subscales constituted another set of independent variables.

The data analysis for this study utilized the analysis of variance, analysis of covariance and multiple regression and correlation methods. The data analysis is discussed in four subsections. The first section, "Job Involvement", presented summary statistics about the nature of the job involvement in the sample as unaffected by any other variable. The second section, "Demographics and Job Involvement", assesses the effects of sex, age, level of education and length of time in current job on degree of job involvement, using analysis of variance methods. The third section, "The Situation and Job Involvement", analyzes the nature, degree, and direction of the association of the nine staff-management environment dimensions with degree of job involvement. The fourth section, "Demographics-Situation and Job Involvement", utilizes analysis of covariance methods to investigate the effects of demographic or personal characteristics and the individual staff management activity dimensions on degree of job involvement. The level of statistical significance utilized in rejecting the null hypotheses or in accepting alternative hypothesis for all statistical tests were set at .05 probability or less. The general theoretical or research hypotheses were that sex, age, level of education, length of time in current job and the employee-management interaction environment via its several dimensions were diufferentially associated with job involvement among its members in higher education support services departments.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on findings in the review of literature, the researcher posited a general theoretical hypothesis. From the results of this study, the researcher now presents the same statement as a general thesis, followed by 14 sub-theses.

The general thesis is: Sex, age, level of education, length of time in current job and the employee- management interaction

environment via its several dimensions are differentially associated with job involvement among members in higher education support services departments. The sub-theses are:

1. Sex is associated with degree of job involvement.
2. Age is associated with the degree of job involvement.
3. Level of education, while not directly associate with job involvement, suppressed the effect of sex on job involvement.
4. Length of time in current job, while not directly associated with job involvement, slightly enhanced the effect of age and sligthly suppressed the effect of sex.
5. Management organization activity primarily affects job involvement indirectly through the recognition activity.
6. Management domination activity has no direct effect on job involvement, but affects job involvement indirectly by suppressing the effect of recognition on job involvement.
7. Management communication activity primarily affects job involvement indirectly through reconition activity.
8. Management membership activity primarily affects job involvement indirectly through recognition activity.
9. Management integration activity primarily affects job involvement through recognition activity.
11. Management representation activity primarily affects job involvement through recognition activity.
12. Management production activity primarily affects job involvement through recognition activity.
13. Management initiation activity primarily affects job involvement through recognition activity.
14. Management recognition activity as the primary activity directed toward staff member is the principal source of variation in job involvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Three recommendations are made based on results revealed in this investigation. All three focus on the need for further research. Specifically, the researcher recommends that:

1. Research be conducted which tests one of the several probable casual models in which job involvement is the independent variables include, but are not necessarily limited to the same list of independent variables utilized in the present study;
2. Research in which other system output variables such as production or Initiation is the dependent variable and degree of job involvement is one of the independent variables to be undertaken; and
3. Research using essentially the same design as the present study but investigating the service areas beyond the scope of present study be done.

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